THE UNFRIENDLY TEACHER

WHEN King David fled from the rebellious uprising of his misguided son, Absalom, an abusive enemy assailed him, by the way, with stones and curses. "Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial!" cried the infuriated Shimei. "The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom, thy son; and behold! thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man."

It was a cowardly attack, and most of what Shimei said was untrue; but the heart of the king was humbled, and he refused to retaliate. Perhaps he did not deserve to be called a "bloody man," but there was one dark blot on his record that gave some excuse for that other insulting epithet, a "man of Belial." "Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him," was the quiet reply of the king; and it is doubtful if we can find anywhere more convincing evidence of David's inborn nobility of soul.

The unfriendly critic is not a pleasant person to meet, and it is difficult to treat his bitter attacks upon us with becoming humility. Our anger rises, and we believe that we "do well to be angry" because our critic's statements represent us in a false light to the eyes of others.

In most cases, however, a little rigid self-examination will convince us that the sharpest sting of unfriendly criticism comes, not from the part of it that is wholly false, but from the far smaller part that is undeniably true. The injurious tale may have no foundation in fact, but it seldom lacks a certain affinity to the temperament or habits of the person of whom it is related, which gives it a measure of reasonableness; and it is the shrewd surmise at what we fancied was a hidden weakness that stirs our indignation.

David's policy of taking Shimei's curses to heart as a word of rebuke from God is worth imitating. An unfeeling enemy often discovers to us a diseased spot that a considerate friend would never reach. He may be a rough surgeon and cause us needless pain, but that is well borne, if healing and recovery come of it in the end.

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important job the
good alarm clock
holds.
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to business and to

to beat the tardy mark

work has
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